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POL:ARGENTINA-CUBA

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ARGENTINIAN PRESIDENT ALFONSIN DEPARTS FROM CUBA

HAVANA, OCT 19, REUTER -- THE PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA, PAUL ALFONSIN, LEFT CUBA TODAY ABOUT A BLUE AND WHITE ARGENTINIAN AIR FORCE PLANE AT 1915GMT (1:00PM LOCAL TIME) AFTER A TWENTY HOUR STAY IN HAVANA DURING WHICH HE CONVERSED EXTENSIVELY WITH CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO.

SPEAKING TO JOURNALISTS AT THE FOOT OF THE RAMP CASTRO SAID THAT "THE CONVERSATIONS HAVE BEEN VERY USEFUL AND I REALLY FEEL SATISFIED WITH THEIR RESULTS."

ARGENTINIAN OFFICIALS ALSO STRESSED THE USEFULNESS OF THE CONVERSATIONS IN CEMENTING BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND IN DISCUSSING AND EXCHANGING VIEWS ON SUCH THEMES AS THE FOREIGN DEBT, WORLD PEACE AND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFLICT.

AT ONE POINT DURING THE OFFICIAL LEAVE-TAKING CEREMONIES AT THE AIRPORT, AS THE TWO PRESIDENTS WERE WALKING BACK TO THE PLANE, CASTRO MOMENTARILY PUT HIS ARM AROUND THE SHOULDER OF ALFONSIN. THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR TO CUBA, LUIS RAUL CLARASO DE LA VEGA SAID THAT CASTRO AND ALFONSIN HAD CONVERSED FOR ABOUT SEVEN HOURS AND THAT THE TONE OF THE TALKS HAD BEEN OPEN AND CORDIAL.

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THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT ALTHOUGH NO HARD AGREEMENTS HAD BEEN REACHED, +THE VERY FACT THAT RAUL ALFONSIN VISITED CUBA AT THE HEAD OF A DELEGATION OF MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED ARGENTINIAN OFFICIALS, BUSINESSMEN, JOURNALISTS AND EVEN THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF MARKED A MILESTONE.+

IT WAS THE FIRST VISIT OF AN ARGENTINIAN PRESIDENT TO CUBA IN HISTORY.

AN ARGENTINIAN OFFICIAL SAID THAT ALTHOUGH MANY HOURS OF THE TALKS WERE HELD IN PRIVACY, IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WAS BROAD AREAS OF AGREEMENT ON MANY INTERNATIONAL ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS. HE SAID THAT BOTH PRESIDENTS EXPRESSED THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE MILITARIZATION OF THE COSMOS AND THEIR ADVOCACY OF A BAN ON THE TESTING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

ON THE ISSUE OF THE CONFLICT IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THE OFFICIS AID, THE PRESIDENTS AGREED THAT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE SHOUL D CEASE

THAT LATIN AMERICANS THEMSELVES, THROUGH THE CONTADORA GROUP, SHOULD FIND THE FORMULA FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

ANOTHER MAJOR THEME, HE SAID, WAS TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS .ONE OF THE STUMBLING BLOCKS TO INCREASED TRADE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS HAS BEEN CUBA'S CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF HARD CURRENCY AND THE NEED FOR SUBSTANTIAL MEDIUM AND LONG TERM CREDIT LINES. TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS REACHED A PEAK IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES AFTER ARGENTINA GAVE CUBA A CREDIT LINE OF MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS.

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